

The duty and power of Intercession

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The duty and power of Intercession.



A Sermon
by His Royal and Imperial Majesty
WILLIAM II.

King of Prussia and Emperor of Germany,

on board the Yacht

"Hohenzollern"

off the coast of Heligoland

July 29th 1900.



Translated by
Rev. J. F. DICKIE D. D.
Pastor of the American Church
BERLIN.

The Duty and Power of Intercession.

Exodus XVII. 11. vs.:

"And it came to pass when Moses held up his hand Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand Amalek prevailed."

An impressive picture it is, which our text limns for us before the mind's eye. Yonder marches Israel through the wilderness from the Red Sea towards Mount Sinai. But suddenly the heathen Amalekites intervene, attempt to bar the passage, and it comes to a trial of arms. Joshua leads the young warrior host of Israel into battle, the swords clash and clang upon each other, and a fierce bloody slaughter begins in the vale of Rephidim. . . . But behold, while the battle surges hither and thither, the pious Men of God, Moses Aaron and Hur ascend to the mountain top. They raise their hands aloft to heaven; they pray. Down here in the valley — the embattled host; up yonder on the mountain

the interceding host. Such is the holy war-picture of our text.

Who does not understand what our text seeks to say to us to-day? Once more the heathenish Amalekite spirit uplifts itself furiously in far off Asia. With great power and cunning craftiness, with fire and sword it seeks to bar the passage and the progress of European commerce and civilisation, and to stem the victorious tide of Christian faith and Christian morals. Once more sounds out the command of God, "Choose out men, go out and fight against Amalek". A fierce and bloody conflict has begun. Already many of our brethren stand yonder in the fire; many are journeying towards the enemy's coasts, and ye have seen with your own eyes the thousands, who at the call: "Volunteers to the front! Who will be the defenders of the Empire?" have assembled themselves together, that with banners flying they might enter the arena of the strife.

But we, who must remain behind in our homes; we, who are held back by many sacred duties . . . tell me, hear we not the call of God that comes to us, and says even to us; "Go up into the mount. Lift

up your hands to heaven. The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much." Well then, yonder, in the distance, the host of warriors . . . here at home the army of intercessors. Such is the sacred war-picture of to-day.

Let this quiet morning hour remind us, let it admonish us of the holy duty of intercession, let it remind us of the sacred power of intercession.

I. The holy duty of Intercession. Truly it is an inspiring moment, when a ship, with its young warriors on board, weighs anchor. Have ye not seen how the eyes of the warriors brighten? Have ye not heard their thousand-voiced Huzzas? But at last when the coast line of Home vanishes from their view, when they enter the burning glare of the Red Sea's heat, or go out to face the storms of ocean, how quickly the glow of novelty and the flush of enthusiasm fade. Truly it is an inspiring moment, when after a long voyage the straight lines of the German forts, and the black, white and red banners of the German Colony are sighted, and the companions-in-arms stand upon the shore to give jubilant welcome . . . but at length, when the long marches come

under a burning sun, and the long bivouacs under a drenching rain . . . how speedily the gladness and strength are enfeebled. Truly it is a long-wished-for moment, when at last the drum beats for the attack, and the trumpet sounds for battle, and the word of command rings out: "Forward-against the foe." But when, amid the thunder of the guns and the bursting of the shells, comrades fall on the right hand and on the left, and the enemy's fire will not weaken . . . how speedily even the heroic heart begins to beat.

Christians! in order that our brethren out yonder may remain cheerful in their most pressing need, may remain faithful in the severest duty, undaunted even in the greatest danger . . . for this they need, more than munitions of war and deadly weapons -- more even than youthful courage and flaming enthusiasm . . . for this they need blessing from on High; otherwise they can neither secure nor retain victory; And that world on high opens itself to prayer alone. Prayer is the golden key to the treasure house of our God. But he, who has this, has also the promise, "He, that asketh, receiveth". Or shall we lay our

hands idly in our bosoms? Woe to us: woe to us, should we be thus lazy and sluggish whilst they are passing through the hard and bloody trial! Woe to us, if we only look upon the great tragedy with eager curiosity from behind the scenes, whilst they are engaged in deadly conflict! That would be Cain's spirit with the cruel cry, Am I my brother's keeper? That were indeed treachery to our brave brethren, who have put for us their lives in jeopardy. Never! Never! we will not merely set battalions of warriors in battle array . . . No, but also a holy legion of praying people.

Verily, how much there is to be petitioned for on behalf of our brethren going forth to battle. They are to be the arm of strength, which metes out punishment to the murderous assassin: they are to be the mailed hand that cleaves for itself a pathway into the chaotic turmoil; sword in hand they are to go forward in defence of our most sacred possessions. Therefore we will give them convoy with our prayers across the stormy sea, upon their long marches, into the thunder of the battle, and into the stillness of the hospital. We will pray God the Lord, that they may manfully stand at their

posts, fight their battles with the courage of heroes all undaunted, that bravely and silently they may endure their wounds; and that God may give to those, who fall under fire, a blessed end and the reward of the faithful: in a word, that He may turn our warriors into heroes; our heroes into conquerors; and that He may bring them home, with laurels upon their helmets and the badge of honour upon their breasts, to the land of their fathers.

II. The sacred power of Intercession. Or have we no faith in the sacred power of intercession? Well then! what saith our text? When Moses held up his hand Israel prevailed. The earnest prayer of a Moses makes the sword of the enemy blunt. It thrusts itself as a wedge into the serried ranks of the foe. It caused them to waver, and it made victory to light on the fluttering flags of Israel. And if the prayers of Moses accomplished all that, shall not our prayers also likewise prevail? God hath taken back no syllable of his promise. True prayer can, even today, lay the Dragon-banner in the dust and plant the banner of the cross upon the enemy's ramparts. Nor does Moses stand alone in his intercession. Look forth!

there, upon the heights above Sodom, stands Abraham interceding with God, and with his supplications he prays Lot out of the burning city. And shall not our intercessions succeed in praying our fighting comrades out of the fire of battle?

Look yonder! there in Jerusalem lies the young christian church upon its knees; their leader, their father lies imprisoned and in fetters; and behold! with their prayers they summon the angel of God into the prison, and he leads Peter safely out. And shall not our prayers have power to burst open the doors of the oppressed, the imprisoned and the persecuted, and to set the angels of God at their side?

O the unimagined power
Of an earnest prayer hour.
Without its aid can naught succeed
In days of joy or times of need.
Step for step, its pathway bends
Working with us as it goes;
Bringing triumph to its friends,
Confusion to its foes.

Yes! the eternal God liveth still. Our mighty Ally still reigneth. The Holy God, who cannot allow sin and wickedness to triumph but directeth the things, that are

holy in His sight, will rise against an ungodly nation. The Almighty, who can pierce through the thickest walls, as though they were spiders' webs, and can scatter the strongest hosts as though they were sand-heaps, — the merciful faithful God, who bears the weal and woe of His children upon His fatherly heart, hears their every sigh and sympathizes with their every need. Holy prayers open his fatherly hand, and it is filled with blessing. Earnest prayers open his fatherly heart, and it is full of love. Yes, faithful persevering prayers bring the living God down, and set Him in the midst: And if God be for us, who can be against us?

Away up yonder in the towers upon the mountain heights hang lonely bells. All silent and dumb they hang in the sunshine. But when the storm-winds come, then they begin to sway; then they begin to sound, and far off in the valley you can hear them ringing.

In every human heart, God hath hung up the bell of prayer. In the sunshine and prosperity of life, how often it hangs all still and silent. But when the storm-winds of trouble break forth, then it begins to ring out. How many a comrade, who has

neglected prayer will fold his hands again over yonder amid the life and death struggle. Trouble teaches us to pray. So should it also be here at home. Let those solemn days, that have dawned upon us, let the war storms, that have burst upon us set the bells of prayer a-ringing once again. Let us pray for our fighting brethren, not only now and then, on sacred days and holy seasons. No, No, let us be instant in prayer. As our fathers, once in war time, when ever the Angelus sounded, uncovered their heads and prayed: "Abide with us Lord Jesus Christ, for it is toward eventide"; so let us on no day forget the prayer of intercession.

Moses held his hands on high until the going down of the sun . . . Then had Joshua already smitten Amalek with the sharpness of the sword. Our conflict will not be brought to an end in a day; but let not the hands grow weary; let them not sink till the victory is won. Let our prayers be a wall of fire around the camp of our brethren. How will the thought strengthen, inspire, inflame them — the thought, thousands nay millions at home bear us upon their praying hearts.

The King of Kings is calling; "Volunteers to the front. Who will be the intercessors of the Kingdom?" Oh! if it could only be said here also, "The King called, and all, all came." Let not one of us fail. He is a man, who can pray.

The history of the world will one day describe the war of these days. But man sees only what meets his gaze. He can only tell what the wisdom of the leader, the bravery of the troops, and the sharpness of the weapons accomplish. Eternity will one day reveal much more. It will make manifest the mighty factor, which the secret prayers of the faithful became in this struggle; how the promise was again fulfilled, "Call upon me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee". And therefore continue instant in prayer. Amen.



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